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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: September Report and October Sermons

Herald of Truth

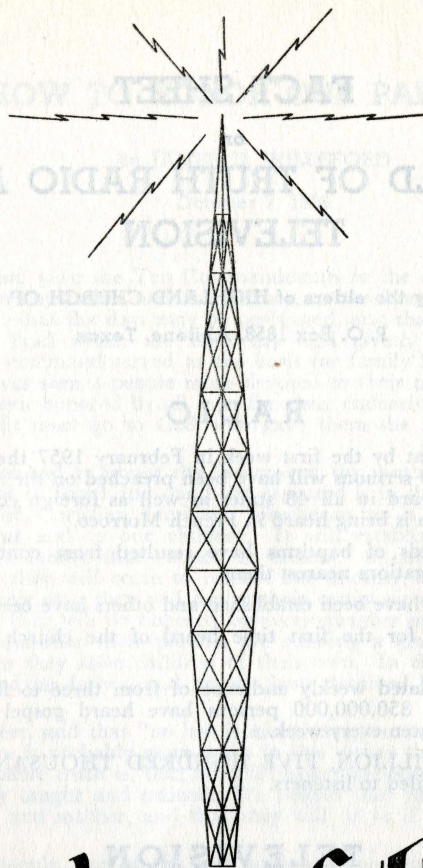
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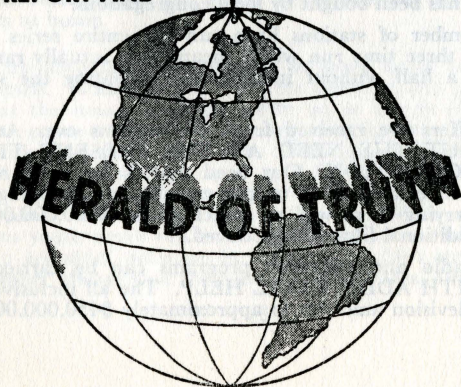


Churches of Christ

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SALUTE YOU

SEPTEMBER REPORT AND

OCTOBER SERMONS—1956



of which they know not, it would make them gentle at all times toward father and mother.

It is not necessary for a child to render some great service to be thoughtful—only a word of cheer perhaps when one is discouraged, a little tenderness when one looks sad, a little timely help when one is overworked. It may be nothing more than the bringing of a chair when father comes in weary, or the running of an errand for mother to save her tired feet, or keeping quiet when baby is sleeping; or it may be only a gentleness of manner showing warmth in the heart.

Children must learn self-denial if they would faithfully do their part in the home. They cannot have everything they desire. They must learn to give up their own wishes for the sake of others. They must learn to do without things that they would like to have. Every member of the family must practice self-denial. The parents must make many sacrifices for the children, and it is certainly right that the children learn early in life to practice self-denial to relieve their parents, and to help them in the home.

Another way for children to honor their parents is to confide in them; not simply by believing in them and trusting their love and their wisdom, but by taking them into their confidence. A wise parent teaches his child from the very beginning to discuss his problems with him, and there is no part of the child's life in which he is not interested. True love between parents and children maintains this openness of heart and life, even into the years of maturity. There are no friends in the world who have as much right to all the confidences of children as their own parents. There are no others in whose hearts these confidences will be so safe; true parents will never betray the trust that is placed in them by their children.

Then there are no other friends who are such safe and wise counsellors. Someone has said that bad advice has wrecked many souls and destinies. And this is true, but the advice of Godly and loving parents has never wrecked a soul. Thousands of lives are wrecked because they will not be guided by it, but none by following it. The children that speak every thought, every hope, every ambition, every plan, every pleasure in the ear of their parents, and consult them on every matter will live safely. At the same time they will confer great happiness upon their parents by confiding so fully in them, for it is a great grief to parents when a child does not confide in them and turns away to others with the sacred confidences of his heart.

A further way that children can honor their parents is by bearing some share of the daily work at home. Instead of always being a burden to the loving parents who live and toil and sacrifice for them, they should seek in every way they can to be of help. Home is the school in which we are first to learn and practice the lessons of life. Children should learn there to be useful to their parents and to one another. They can do much in this direction by not requiring unnecessary attention, and by not making trouble and work for others on their account. There are a few spoiled children who are such selfish tyrants at home that all the other members of the family are taxed to wait upon them. As soon as possible children should learn to wait upon themselves and in a measure to be independent of the help of others, so as to become self-reliant and strong. What more painful picture do we see than that of sons and daughters growing up idle and selfish in their own homes, too lazy to exert themselves, and too proud to soil their dainty hands with any kind of work, but not too proud to let overworked parents slave to keep them in good food and fine dress!

A young girl went out in the country to spend a day with friends. She looked so sweet and cool in her dainty dress that her friends were almost inclined to be envious. After a time the young lady said, "Mama is not at all well lately. I feel quite worried about her." "Why didn't you bring her with you? This country air would do her a world of good," her friends asked. The young girl replied, "She is ironing today. Mama has such big ironings, especially in the summer. Then, as you know, I'm going to the seashore soon, and mama is sewing for me. I have several dresses to be made, besides several other items of clothing." While she proceeded enthusiastically to describe the fashions, and her plans for a summer of play, her friends were busy with their thoughts. And there is no need to point a moral to this true little tale.

It is not difficult for the world to see which children really honor their parents. Honor, or the lack of it, is demonstrated daily in the home. One author stresses this truth in a poem, entitled: *Showing Love for Mother*:

"I love you, Mother," said little John;
Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on
And he was off to the garden swing
And she had the wood and water to bring.

"I love you, Mother," said rosy Nell;
"I love you more than tongue can tell."
Then she teased and pouted half the day,
Till her mother was glad when she went to play.

"I love you, Mother," said little Nan;
"Today I'll help you all I can;
My doll and playthings I know will keep!"
Then she rocked the baby fast asleep.
Then, stepping softly, she brought the broom,
And swept the floor and tidied the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and good as a child could be.

"I love you, Mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed.
How do you think the mother guessed
Which of them really loved her best?

—Olive Plants, in *3000 Illustrations for Christian Service*, by Walter B. Knight, p. 455;
Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

While it is true that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," it is equally true that "all play and no work makes Jack a mere toy." There are too many playboys in our modern world. Gone are the days when children toiled in the sweatshops; and thank God for that, but we have swung so far to the other extreme that many children grow up without knowing the meaning of work. Many parents say, "We don't want our children to go through what we had to suffer, the hardships we had to endure, the disappointments we had to face. We want our children to be happy and carefree." One editor stated the problem of these parents pretty well when he said, "Twenty-five years from now there will be 'letters to the editor' about how all the juveniles are delinquent because they don't have the old-time chores around the house any more, like turning up the thermo-

stat every morning or pushing the button to open the garage door!" (John W. McKelvey, in *Christian World Pulpit*, May 19, 1955, p. 155).

Another way for children to honor their parents is to make themselves worthy of their parents. They should seek to be all that the father and mother have hoped for them. It is a sad thing to disappoint love's brilliant expectations. It matters not so much if mere dreams of earthly greatness fail to come true, for oftentimes the hopes of ambitious parents for their children are only for honors that wither in a day, or for wealth that only sinks the soul into ruin. Such hopes were better disappointed. But in the heart of every true Christian parent there glows an ideal of character and nobleness of soul, which he wants to see his children attain. Every true, Godly parent dreams of the most perfect manhood and womanhood for his sons and daughters. He wants to see them grow up into Christlikeness, spotless in purity, rich in all the graces, with character fully developed and rounded out in spiritual beauty, shining in this world, but shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Just here let us suggest to children that much of what seems to you "fussiness" and needless fault-finding on the part of your parents is due to anxiety on their part for your welfare. Your parents may sometimes err through over-anxiety or through unwise and irritating admonitions to you, but you should recognize the fact that deep anxiety for your well-being is at the root of even this excessive carefulness.

If children would do their part in return for all the love that has blessed their helpless years and surrounded them in their youth, and that lingers still in the days of manhood and womanhood, they must seek to realize in their own lives all the sacred hopes of their parents' hearts. A wrecked and debauched manhood or a frivolous and purposeless womanhood is a poor return for parental love, fidelity, and sacrifice. But a noble life, a character strong, true, earnest and Christlike, brings blessed and satisfying reward to a parent for the most toilsome and painful years of self-forgetting love. Parents live in their children, and children hold in their hands the happiness of their parents. Let us never be untrue to their sacred trust. Let us never bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Let us be worthy of the love, almost divine, that holds us in its deathless grasp. Let us live so as to be a crown of honor to our parents in their old age. Let us fill their declining years with sweetness and tenderness. Let us make a pillow of peace for their heads when death comes to them.

The best way for us to honor our parents is to be Christians ourselves. The gospel of Christ will develop our hearts, and prepare them for greater service to others. It will change our attitude, and transform our present duties into precious privileges. Our obligation to our parents, our companions, our children, our friends will no longer be irksome, but a genuinely pleasant experience. Of all people in the world, genuine Christians should be the best to their families, for the Bible says to them, "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness . . . And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:12-14, 17). A person who obeys the gospel, and develops these Christian traits will love and honor his parents.

The Lord is asking for your soul at this moment. The Bible says, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). Instant obedience to the Lord is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Every time God calls us to any duty, He is offering to make a covenant with us, and the only way we can obey is to obey "in the self-same day" as Abraham did. To be sure, we often postpone a duty and then later on do it as fully as we can. It is better to do this than not to do it at all. But it is then, at the best, only a crippled, disfigured, half-way sort of duty-doing; and a postponed duty never can bring the full blessing that God intended, and that it would have brought if done at the earliest possible moment.

And so, we are asking you to obey the gospel of Christ today. Will you remember the prompt obedience of the Jews on the day of Pentecost. When they heard the apostle Peter preach, the Bible says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:42). Will you follow the example of the people of Samaria? The Lord says that "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

PROVIDING FOR AGED PARENTS

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

October 14, 1956

In many parts of the country, our city and county welfare agencies say that welfare costs have skyrocketed during the past ten years. Some of these agencies testify that their expenditures for 1956 will be more than triple the total amount spent for the same purposes in 1946 (*Abilene Reporter-News*, Aug. 13, 1956).

Much of this welfare money goes to support aged parents who have sons and daughters that are well able to provide for their needs. How can any able-bodied young man leave his parents to the care of the State? Why should any one of us find it less than a privilege to support them when they are elderly and in need? When our parents grow old they exchange places, as it were, with us. There were years when we were feeble and helpless, unable to care for ourselves; then they cared for us. They watched over us; they toiled and sacrificed for us; they sheltered us from hardship and trial; they threw around our tender years love's gentleness and protection. Now we are strong and they are feeble; we are able to endure hardship and toil, but the faintest breath of storm makes them tremble and the lightest toil wearies them. This is the time for us to repay them. It is ours now to show tenderness to them, to shelter them from trial, and to pour about them as much of love's tenderness as possible.

It may be necessary when our parents grow old for us to give them financial support, and this we should gladly do. This duty is required by the law of love, and it should be cheerfully and lovingly fulfilled. The command to honor father and mother calls for us to give them support when they need it. Children who willingly permit their parents to suffer need or to go to the poorhouse dishonor their parents and disgrace themselves. Such ungrateful people invite a curse upon themselves, and they will eventually reap what they sow.

Never did the fires of Christ's indignation burn with fiercer heat than when He denounced the heartless quibbling of the Jewish Rabbis who suffered men to escape their obligations to their parents. To these religious leaders He said, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; . . . But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:9-13). In this Scripture the Lord speaks of the Pharisees who had a custom of refusing in certain cases to assist their needy parents, and this they refused to do on the ground that what they owned was already consecrated to God, and hence they claim that they were released from the duty of maintaining their parents. It was enough for them to exclaim, "Corban!"—that is, "Already devoted!" If a man should say that he was dedicating whatever he owed to his father and mother as a gift to God, or to the religious leaders, then these leaders convinced him that he was under no obligation to help his destitute parents. But the Son of God pointed out the impiety which lurked beneath this cloak of sanctity, and He charged that the Pharisees had thus dishonored God, and had made His word of none effect by their tradition. And the Scripture that Jesus used to unmask their hypocrisy was the command to honor thy father and mother. Our Lord has decreed that sons and daughters who expect His blessing must provide financial support for their aged parents if it is necessary.

The Lord says, "if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God . . . But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:4, 8). How wicked, then, for prosperous Christian families to let mother or father go on the relief rolls! Why should the government support the parents of Christian young people? Why should the church have to care for aged parents who have children that are able to do it? God's plan is not old age pensions, nor relief, nor a dole from the church for aged Christians. His plan is that sons and daughters should provide for their parents. That is part of what it means to "Honour thy father and thy mother." And we might add that providing for the needs of aged parents is not the responsibility of just one of the children, but where there are several in the family, each must share according to his ability in fulfilling this duty.

A few years ago when we lived in Wisconsin, an elderly man asked us to take him out in the country to see his son and his daughter-in-law. This man had been desperately ill for several weeks in the hospital, and during that illness his son had visited him two or three times. But after his release from the hospital the son had neglected to visit his father, and the old man yearned to see him. So we agreed to take him to see his boy. When we came to the son's home he showed us over his four hundred and fifty acre farm. He was very proud of it, and he boasted of owning it outright. He also owned and operated a cheese factory, milked sixty or seventy cows, had seven hundred hogs ready for market, and was ready to sell fourteen thousand dollars worth of corn which he had left over after feeding his stock and fattening his hogs. We have never seen many farmers who were more prosperous than this young man, but when his daddy was ready to leave that afternoon, he asked for a dozen eggs. And his son promptly charged him sixty cents for them. This, in spite of the fact that his father was all but destitute.

At the moment we have before us an article from *The Capital Times* of Madison, Wisconsin which states that, "Welfare workers and representatives of taxpayers' associations supported a bill before the Senate Committee on Education and Public Welfare Wednesday which would tighten up procedures for forcing relatives to support needy dependents . . . The bill provided that where a recipient of public assistance has relatives financially able to support him, the district attorney must bring action in court to force such support." The director of the State Department of Public Welfare, told the committee the bill is "a real attempt to get responsible persons to contribute something to the care of their relatives." The director added, "I can't feel that God-fearing persons can refuse to support their aged parents if they are able to do so. It's completely cold-blooded" (February 19, 1953). It is a sad commentary on our Americanism, and a serious reflection on the Christianity we profess, that our government must force us to honor those who gave us birth!

We have just read a little story that illustrates why we should assist our parents when they are old and in need. Many years ago, when America was growing up, a poor circuit rider brought home four apples, which were a rare fruit on the almost orchardless frontier. When the man's wife had given one apple to each of her three boys, she placed the one meant for her on the mantle. After the boys had eaten their apples their mother saw them observing hers, whereupon she cut it into three pieces for them. The boys returned to the cabin porch and as they munched the fruit they discussed how strange it was that their mother did not care for apples. But when the boys became men they came to understand that it was not because their mother did not like apples, but that she liked little boys better. How can sons and daughters refuse to assist their parents who have loved them so!

But a final way that we can honor our parents is by loving them. This is the last and best element in parental honor—it comes the earliest and stays the longest. Other duties to parents may be commanded, but love comes unbidden and unsought. As J. O. Dykes says, "It survives adolescence. It survives the independence of adult life. It survives the separate home and the sundered interests. It survives the formation of new ties and the growth of younger loves. It survives life's manifold storms and changes. It survives the old age of parents, their dotage, decay, and death. Beautiful always, it is never more so than when it teaches busy famous men or active burdened women to forget their public toil, or their household care, that they may soothe the dying pillow of an aged parent" (*The Law of the Ten Words*, p. 120).

Some young people may say that their parents are not lovable, and that therefore they cannot love them; not wise, and that therefore they cannot respect them; that they are unreasonable, and selfish, that they have vices of temper and speech, and, perhaps, vices of a still grosser kind, and that therefore it is simply impossible to honour them. There are not a few children in our day who are disposed to argue that our parents have a right to just that measure of respect and affection from us, which they can claim on the ground of their intelligence and worth, no more and no less.

At first sight this reasoning looks plausible for how can I love anyone who has very little in her to love, simply because she happens to be my mother? How can I respect anyone in whom there is nothing to respect, simply because he happens to be my father? But, my young friend, how would it have fared with *you* if your father and mother had had the same

ideas about your claims on them? Some of you may want your parents to stand on the same ground as other men and women, and to be loved and respected by you according to their personal merits, just as if they had no natural relationship to you. What would have happened if they had been equally philosophical and impartial, and if they had given you only as much affection and care as you seemed to deserve?

Most of us were not very lovable when we were children, and all of us were not angelically beautiful. To nearly everyone but our parents we were very uninteresting and very troublesome. But, happily, our fathers and mothers thought us wonderful. They found a grace in our movements, a music in our voice, a wit in our childish impertinences, which no one but themselves ever discovered. We were nearly all heroes once, and some of us, perhaps, were looked upon as saints. While the honest truth about most of us was, that our faces were very plain, that our intellects were very dull, that our tempers were far from amiable, that we were fretful and selfish. But our parents loved us because we were their own children, and their love transfigured us. We were "as ugly as a mud fence," but the light and glory of their affection shone on us, and to them at least we were clothed with a rainbow.

A mother does not argue that it is possible to love only the lovable child; a father does not say that his boys and girls can claim from him only what their worth merits. And you must love your parents and honor them because they are yours, and not because of their own personal worth or merit. And if that love and honor is absent from your heart, its absence should be confessed as a sin.

That we may be impressed with the facts that our parents have us enthroned in their hearts, we are relating a simple, child-like story. A little girl was sitting on her mother's knee. She was very fond of her mother, and like one who was rejoicing over very precious treasures she was touching, one after the other, the features of her mother's face with her little fingers—her mother's lips, her eyes, her cheeks, her hair. After a while she said, "Mummy, can I see your heart?" The mother said, "I don't know about that, but you can look into my eyes, and see if you can see anything." The child climbed up and peered in, and then she cried out gleefully, "I can see your heart, Mummy, and there is a wee girl away in there, and it's me!" (*3000 Illustrations for Christian Service*, by Walter B. Knight, p. 458.)

We all like to be loved by our friends and our loved ones, and we like to be told that we are loved. We feel like one who said, "If you love me, tell me so." Do not say it is a selfish desire; it is the cry of parched souls that are thirsting for love and sympathy. And perhaps there is none who utter that cry so often in silence as our fathers and mothers. Let us love them, and let us learn to tell them so.

We have always appreciated Carlyle more after reading his last letter to his mother. In the letter he said, "My dear, good mother let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honourably and well while in strength, and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for so many years; but there is nothing I ever had to be so much thankful for as the mother I had. That is a truth which I know well, and perhaps this day again it may be some comfort to you. Yes, surely, for if there has been good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was your

voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean, this was the purport of all I spoke and wrote. And if in the few years that may remain to me I am to get any more written for the world, the essence of it, so far as it is worthy and good, will still be yours. May God reward you, my dearest mother, for all you have done for me! I never can." (*The Ten Commandments*, by George Jackson, p. 107.)

Oftentimes children build monuments in memory of their parents, but the greatest monument of all is true character. We are sure that parents would much rather have their children build this kind of a monument than any other. Character will be reflected in the lives of many generations to come, while marble will crumble away.

The best way to build lasting character is to follow the instructions of the Bible. It says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Remember God in the days of thy youth by serving Him constantly. Believe in Him, repent of your sins, confess the name of His Son and obey His will. Be baptized into Christ and then serve Him faithfully all of your days. Let the Bible be your guide, and from its sacred pages you will receive divine help in your hours of temptation.

The songwriter had you in mind when he wrote:

"How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?"

Thy word the choicest rules imparts
To keep the conscience clean.

'Tis like the sun, a heav'nly light,
That guides us all the day;

And thro' the dangers of the night,
A lamp to lead our way.

Thy word is everlasting truth;
How pure is ev'ry page!

That holy book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age."

"A PLEA FOR UNITY"

By PAUL McCLUNG

October 21, 1956

Let us suppose that one of you should move into a little city that is badly divided. Let us suppose that this town is so badly divided and so torn into contending factions that growth and progress are next to impossible. Let us suppose that you become so deeply concerned about the welfare and especially the future of the town that you begin a diligent study of the divided condition with the view of trying to find some way that all can be united. After much study you devise a plan whereby all may unite without anyone having to compromise a single principle of right. You would be performing a worthwhile work in calling the people of this town together and presenting this plan to them and pleading with them to accept it. In fact, you would be commended for manifesting such an interest in the peace and success of the community!

The believers in Jesus Christ in this country of ours are badly divided. The professed followers of Christ in this country are divided into several hundred contending demoninations or churches. And this is doing more to defeat Christianity than any other one thing! If the world as a whole ever comes to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the professed followers of Christ must become one as the Father and the Son are one. In John 17:20, 21 we find Jesus praying to the Father and he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." In this passage Jesus clearly implies that as long as the professed followers of Christ are divided, the world as a whole will not believe in Jesus. Honest men look at the professed followers of Christ who have one Bible, one God, and one Savior, but who are divided into hundreds of

conflicting denominations, and they become bewildered! Many have drifted into a church with friends or relatives, without any individual faith or conviction of their own; others have become disgusted and have turned to infidelity. Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know that my own grandfather died without becoming a member of any church, and he gave as the reason: "There are so many churches and good people in all of them, that I do not know which is right. Lest I get in the wrong one, I will stay out of all of them."

The apostle Paul makes it clear that this divided condition which exists in the religious world is sinful. Listen to these words, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Note, please, that Paul does not in this passage plead for union, but unity or oneness. He says, "I beseech you, that ye all speak the same thing." In other words, all should

teach and preach the same thing. Again he says, "That there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

The lamentable divided condition of the religious world today does not exist without someone being to blame. The responsibility for this condition must rest on someone. Paul thought the blame could be placed on someone, for he said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). No one should without due consideration cast all of the blame on others. All of us should examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. We should prove our own selves (2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Is it possible for all of the professed followers of Christ to be united without anyone having to give up a principle of faith? I believe that such is possible. If all believers would take the Word of God, all of it, and only it; if all would teach and practice all that is found in the Bible and refuse to teach and practice anything which is not found therein, all could and would be one. In other words, all that we would have to do to be one would be for all to speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent. This is what Peter tells us to do in 1 Peter 4:11. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." The apostle John warns against adding to and taking from the word of God in Revelation 22:18, 19.

We can never have the unity for which our Lord prayed in John 17 without a common faith. And we can never have a common faith without a common creed. Is there a single creed which all can accept without compromising a single principle of faith? Is there a single rule book that all can follow? There must be, for Paul in Phil. 3:16 says, "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." What is that rule book? It is not any of the human creeds, but it is the divine one! It is the Bible, all of it, and yet nothing but the Bible. If you cannot accept this creed without compromising a principle of your faith, you are holding to principles that are human and not divine. All divine teaching is found in the Bible.

For the sake of unity, all men and churches should be willing to give up matters of opinion, but I do not believe any man or church should be asked to give up matters of faith. There is a vast difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion. Faith is that which comes by hearing God's word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Romans 10:17). To make this as clear as possible, let me say that whenever I tell you that I believe a thing, I must be able to turn to God's word and read the authority from which that faith comes. If there is no evidence or testimony in the book of God, it is merely a matter of personal opinion. The reason for this is that all other books contain the opinions of men. Every human creed contains either more or less than the Bible. If it contains more than the Bible, "the more" is composed of the opinions of men. If it contains less than the Bible what is left out was dropped because the opinions of men said that it was not good. We cannot ask all men to unite with us on our opinions, but we can ask them to unite with us on the Bible!

The Bible is the only creed book which we need. Psalms 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Peter, in 2 Peter 1:3, says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness." Then Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Surely we are pursuing a safe course when we take the Bible, all of it, but nothing other than it, as our creed book. This is the only basis on which all can unite!

There has been much division and dissension among the professed followers of Christ in reference to the religious names they wear. Is there a single name on which all can unite? There is no human name which all will accept, but there is a divine name which all must accept if we are to be saved! Peter in Acts 4:12, speaking of Christ, said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." From Isa. 62:2 we learn that after the Gentiles came into the Church, God's people were to be called a new name, "Which the mouth of the Lord shall name." In Acts 11:26 we find a fulfillment of this prophesy. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Since the name "christian" was divinely given all can accept this name. Since human names cause divisions and all could never agree to wear any one of them, let us lay aside all human names and wear only the name Christian. This is a way that all must admit is right and cannot be wrong.

Much division has been caused in the religious world by men teaching the doctrine of election and predestination. In other words, some teach that, "By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 3, Art. 3.) Others stoutly deny this teaching. Many discussions on this subject have been warm and fierce. Is there a safe course to pursue in regard to this teaching? Is there any ground on which we can all unite? I believe there is. The Bible teaches that all must believe in Christ, John 8:24. "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16.) All must repent. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent," Acts 17:30. (Luke 24:46, 47; Luke 13:3.) All must confess Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved," Romans 10:9. (Matthew 10:32.) All must be baptized. "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts 2:38. All must live Godly. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world," Tit. 2:12. Since all of these things are required of men in the word of God, it is certainly right for men to do them. If we do them, and then at last it proves to be true that some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are ordained to everlasting death, our having done them will in no wise change our destiny! While on the other hand, if this doctrine proves to be untrue, and God accepts only those who believe, love, and obey him, then we are still safe. Therefore, let others be right or let them be wrong as to election and predestination, it is right and cannot be wrong to believe and obey the gospel. Here is ground on which all can unite.

Many insist that men are saved the moment they believe on the Lord. These people say men are saved before and without further acts of obedience to God's commandments. Others deny this and on this point arguments often become warm. Those of us who are members of the church of Christ insist because of the passages just read, that man must not only believe on

the Lord, but must repent, confess his faith, and be baptized. If it proves to be true when we stand before God in the judgment that he accepts us and saves us from our past sins the moment we believe and trust him, surely the fact that our faith was strong enough to lead us to obey Christ will not cause us to be any the less saved. But, if it should prove in that great day, as it surely will, that God demands not only faith but also obedience to his will, we are still safe, James 2:24. Therefore, let others be right or let them be wrong as to salvation by faith only, it is right and cannot be wrong to not only believe but also obey the gospel. Surely all can unite on this.

There are those who teach that when an individual is once saved, that he has no power to do that which will cause him to be lost. The Bible teaches that men must be faithful unto the end of the way. Jesus, in Matthew 10:22, says, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Revelation 2:10 says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Then Paul, in 2 Peter 1:10, says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." If in the judgment it proves to be true that once a man is saved he is always saved, we will be none the worse off for having lived as close to the Lord as we could. But if only those who are faithful will be saved, we are still safe! So let others be right or let them be wrong in teaching once saved always saved; it is right and cannot be wrong to remain faithful unto the Lord unto the end of the way. This is an infallible safe way. Surely all can unite on this!

There are those who teach that God operates on the hearts of people by his Holy Spirit, independent of his gospel and word. If this be true, God alone determines the ones on whom he will bestow this blessing. We insist that if there is such a blessing for the human family as a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, that God, in selecting the ones whom He will bestow this power, will not pass by those who have come to believe on his son through a study of his word and are doing their best to be pleasing unto him. Those of us who are members of the church of Christ do not believe that the Holy Spirit works separate and apart from the word of God, for Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, says, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." Let the doctrine of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit be true or let it be false, we are right and cannot be wrong in studying God's word and doing our best to bring our lives into harmony with its teaching.

The religious world is sadly divided over the action of baptism. Some contend for sprinkling and pouring, while others contend for immersion only. Is there a safe ground on which all can unite? I believe there is. Speaking of baptism, in Romans 6:4, Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Col. 2:21; Matthew 3:16.) In view of this passage, no believer in the Bible will deny that the immersion of a penitent believer is baptism. It is only contended that sprinkling and pouring will do as well, and that they are more convenient! Let others be right or let them be wrong in regard to sprinkling and pouring: we do know it is right and cannot be wrong to practice immersion. Surely all can unite on this!

Again, much division has been caused by the introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship of the church. So far as I know, no one contends that instrumental music is essential to acceptable worship, but many contend that it is permissible. 2 John 9 says, "Whosoever trans-

gresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." (Revelation 22:18.) Since we are warned against going on and refusing to abide in the doctrine of Christ, and since we know that the early Christians used only a cappella singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:15), we believe that it is absolutely safe to sing without making music on mechanical instruments. This is ground which all agree is safe. Then why not unite on this ground?

If the religious world is ever united it will have to be on the basis set forth in the scriptures. Remember, friends, that division is a terrible sin. All who are responsible for it must give an account for it in the day of judgment. I close with the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

THE MEANING OF THE RESTORATION

BURTON COFFMAN (Manhattan Church of Christ)

October 28, 1956

What is the meaning of the restoration? What are the principles underlying that great religious movement described by "Life Magazine" in its special issue on Christianity under date of December 26, 1955, page 105 as "the largest native American" religious group?

One person out of every one hundred persons in the entire United States today belongs to the churches of Christ. This percentage holds good in almost every walk of life, whether in big league baseball or in the halls of Congress. Furthermore, within the past twenty years, this so-called "native American" church has spilled over the boundaries of the United States and has already gained a significant foothold in Italy, Germany, Japan, Korea, and many other nations. It is the purpose of this sermon to set forth some of the major premises of The Restoration Movement.

There Needs to be a Restoration

If one reads the New Testament and then studies the prevailing religious situation in the world today, he will be astounded at the contrast. There has been a widespread, fundamental departure from the religion of Christ and the apostles. Furthermore, this departure, or falling away from the faith, was precisely foretold by Christ and at least three of the apostles.

Jesus Christ himself predicted that there would be false teachers who, like "wolves in sheep's clothing" would lead men astray from the truth. These wolves, camouflaged as sheep, will be the basis of an eternal disappointment; for Jesus said, "Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22-23).

The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of "grievous wolves" that would enter in among them, not sparing the flock. (Acts 20). He also

expressed the gravest fear that, as Satan beguiled Eve, he might also beguile the bride of Christ, corrupting the true church from "the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." (II Corinthians 11:3). Almost an entire chapter from the New Testament book of II Thessalonians is devoted to a description of what is called in Scripture, "the apostasy" or "the falling away." Paul declared that the judgment day would not come till "the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).

The holy apostles Peter and John likewise foretold the general corruption and perversion of Christianity to follow the apostolic age.

The Apostle Peter mentioned particularly the great multitude of men who would be deceived by false teachers. He said, "Among you there shall be false teachers who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And, in covetousness, shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." (II Peter 2:1-3).

The most astonishing prophesy of the apostasy is in the Book of Revelation, where in the most emphatic language the apostasy is presented under the figure of a shameless, impure woman. Whereas, the original church of Christ is set forth as a beautiful and pure bride of Christ, the historical transition from that church is presented as the "mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."

The Apostle John said, "I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abomination, even the unclean things of her fornication. MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Revelation 17:3-6). "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'" (Revelation 18:4).

Now, all of these passages from the Holy Bible, which we have just read, carry one tremendous, thundering message to all peoples in all times and nations. That message is THAT AN AWFUL APOSTASY OR DEPARTURE FROM THE PURE CHRISTIANITY is certain to appear after the death of the apostles. This great falling away from the faith was to be of the greatest magnitude, according to the apostles. It would touch all peoples, kindred, and tongues of the earth. The pure bride of Christ was to be supplanted by a brazen harlot, riding on the back of a beast, and drunk with the blood of martyrs.

It is not the province of this sermon to make particular applications of these great prophecies of the Word of God. We say in one word, ALL these things have come to pass. Grievous wolves have not spared the flock. The Spirit of Lawlessness has been revealed. The man of sin is manifest. There are many false teachers. In this fact, we may claim the concurrence of an almost universal world opinion. Bible students of many diverse beliefs

are fully agreed that the apostasy has indeed come to pass. The first premise of the Restoration plea is established beyond question or doubt. THERE HAS BEEN A DEPARTURE FROM THE TRUE WAY. THERE NEEDS TO BE A RESTORATION.

A Restoration Exemplified

There is a Scriptural precedent and example for the Restoration.

In the Second Book of Kings, is the story of King Josiah who came to the throne in Jerusalem at a time of shameful corruption and religious depravity. Jerusalem in that time, namely, about 619 B.C., had become like many of the great pagan cities of that generation. The people had neglected to keep the sabbath day or the passover. Groves and images of pagan deities filled the city, and even a king had made his son pass through the fire to go to Molech. The true religion of Almighty God had been so completely forgotten that when a workman in the temple found a copy of part of the Old Testament, no one knew what it was until an appeal to the prophetess Huldah established it indeed as the Word of God.

When Josiah, the young king, learned that the book was actually God's Word, he commanded it to be read to all the people who bound themselves with a solemn commitment to keep its commandments. Daily sacrifices were again offered as commanded. They started once more to observe the sabbath day and the passover. Of that passover, kept for the first time after long and shameful neglect, the Bible says, "And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto Jehovah your God, as it is written in the book of the covenant. Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah."—(II Kings 23:21-23).

Josiah made sweeping changes in Jerusalem. He swept away the groves and images. He called the people to return to the way they had forsaken. The basis for all this was the Word of God, which he found, read, and obeyed.

Now was this a "new" religion, proposed and set up by Josiah? No, indeed. He merely restored the old and True religion. The sabbath day was "new" to that generation, but old to the people of God. That passover was indeed a new and thrilling experience in Josiah's day, but the institution of the passover was old, old as the delivery of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Generations had risen and vanished who had long and faithfully kept the passover. Josiah did not bring a new religion. HE RESTORED THE OLD AND TRUE RELIGION.

In exactly the same way, churches of Christ are preaching the old, the original Christianity. Churches of Christ today are not merely a "new" religion. The religion we teach and practice is not indigenous to North America or the United States. It is not really a "native American" church at all, but a RESTORATION OF THE DOCTRINES, AND PRACTICES OF THE ORIGINAL RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TWELVE APOSTLES. The proof of this is in every man's hand. It is in the New Testament.

The Pattern of the Restoration

A pattern is always needed for a restoration. For example, when the Parthenon of Pericles in Nashville, Tennessee, was restored in 1897, the

pattern of the ancient Parthenon of the fifth Century Before Christ was very carefully followed.

Only two short blocks from Manhattan Church of Christ in New York City is the Metropolitan Museum. In that museum is a restoration of some of the burial chambers of one of the great pyramids of Egypt. The basis of that restoration is the pattern of the ancient pyramid itself, carefully observed in every detail by the artists and craftsmen who produced the restoration.

Josiah, likewise carried out his restoration by using the pattern of God's Word. There must be a pattern, and it must be strictly observed if a restoration is to have any meaning.

The pattern for the Restoration now being preached is the Word of God, particularly the New Testament. This book alone contains the True Christian teaching. Here alone are found the words of Christ. This book, and this book alone contains the true record of the deeds and doctrines of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Moses was about to build the tabernacle, the Bible declares that God warned Moses to "make all things according to the pattern." (Hebrews 8:5). This command is binding upon all who would build the church today. It is specifically declared that this warning of God to the great Jewish Lawgiver, Moses, was to serve "As a copy and shadow of the heavenly things."

Thus the injunction stands with the authority of heaven that those who build a church should do so "according to the pattern." When the pattern is followed, the church will conform to the original. It will not be a human organization nor a man-made system but will be a *restoration* of the original church as established by Christ through his apostles.

The restoration movement today is an increasing success at home and abroad. The dream of establishing and building God's true church in an age of religious darkness and confusion is a happy one, and those who catch the vision are moved to devote themselves fully to its achievement.

The New Testament as Final Authority

One significant result of the Restoration is the elevation of the New Testament to its rightful place as the full and final authority in the church.

The New Testament contains all that is actually known of Christ. This is the "word first spoken by the Lord." This is the teaching, according to the Lord Jesus Christ that "shall judge men in the last day." (John 12:48). This is the authority which men are forbidden to add to or take from. The last paragraph of the New Testament makes it sinful either to augment or diminish the words of Sacred Scriptures. The New Testament is the great witness of Jesus Christ for this dispensation. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this slender little volume that occupies a place in world history that is altogether unique. So profound and moving are the words of this book, the New Testament, that they carry conviction to every honest heart. As long as this volume exists, the faith in Jesus Christ and the church he established shall not pass from the earth. The New Testament is received in churches of Christ as the final high court of religious authority. When the books are opened in judgment, the New Testament will surely

be among them; for here indeed is the word that shall judge men at the last day.

The Plan of Salvation Restored

Another achievement of the Restoration Movement is the preaching once more of the plan of salvation as revealed in the New Testament. During the Dark Ages, men relied upon salvation as prescribed by the Medieval Church. During the reformation, many relied upon the direct operation of the Holy Ghost. Some even sought to work out systems of their own. But with the beginning of the Restoration, men were taught to obey the gospel just like they did in the days of the apostles. There was no effort to accommodate the gospel to the speculations of theology. Faith, repentance, confession of faith in Christ, baptism for the remission of sins, faithfulness unto death, and membership in the body of Christ were restored to their ancient place as the "plan of redemption" for fallen man. For the first time following the apostasy, men were told what to do to be saved in the words of the Scriptures rather than in terms of human theology. Today, wherever the true gospel is preached, men are converted exactly as they were in the times of the apostles. Men hear, believe, repent, and are baptized into Christ, being buried with the Lord in baptism, exactly as saints and martyrs of the first century. Today, men are commanded in the name of Christ, even as Ananias commanded Saul of Tarsus, to "Arise and be baptized and wash away" their sins. (Acts 22:16).

The New Testament worship has also been restored. This includes a weekly observance of the Lord's supper, singing without the use of mechanical instruments of music, prayers for all men, the giving of one's substance for the support of the gospel, and the preaching or teaching of God's word. For this type of worship, there is a "thus saith the Lord." Other things which came into Christian worship in the post-apostolic period must ever rely for their authority upon the words of men, rather than the Word of God. Jesus Christ said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7). This, of course, indicates that human precepts are not to be received as authority for Christian worship. In the Restoration plea, there is no place for acceptance of human traditions and innovations in the worship of Christ. It makes no difference how long established or how widely accepted a given practice may be, if there is no "thus saith the Lord," to support it, it is rejected.

Paul himself would be at home in any church of Christ today. If he were to attend worship at 48 East 80th Street with the Manhattan Church of Christ in New York City today, or in any of the sixteen thousand congregations of this faith throughout the world, he would find the disciples breaking bread on the first day of the week exactly as they were doing at Troas in the first century. You will remember of course that in Acts, 20th chapter, there is this record of Paul's visit to the Troas church in which it is related that "The disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread." (Acts 20:7). We might add that the disciples still meet together on the first day of the week to break bread, that is, take the Lord's supper.

The RESTORATION has likewise brought about a return to the independence and religious freedom of the New Testament times. Every congregation is free and independent of every other congregation, human domination or dictatorship. This is exactly according to the pattern in the New Testament.

The sovereignty of every local church or congregation is everywhere respected among churches of Christ. This principle was enunciated by Christ himself when he said, concerning a pyramided system of church government, "Not so shall it be among you." (Matthew 20:26). Every congregation of the Lord's people is free under God to order its own services, employ its own servants, and carry forward its own program of work and worship without subordination to any ecclesiastical authority. It shall always remain a mystery to free Christians why countless persons who are willing to fight and die for political liberty should give so little thought to religious liberty which is a thousand times more important.

It is significant that at a time when the citizens of the New World were casting off the political bonds that subjected them to the Old World there should have arisen at the same time a mighty tide of religious strength looking toward a dissolution of all ecclesiastical bonds other than those directly imposed by the Holy Scriptures. As Thomas Jefferson expressed it, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every tyranny over the mind of man." The Restoration plea is one that dares to apply this principle of liberty and freedom to religion as well as politics.

Thus, the RESTORATION has already achieved significant success. Its message of freedom and truth shall yet be heard in all nations. The task may not be accounted as complete until every nation under heaven has heard the gospel preached from the New Testament without human additives or omissions. However, enough is done, even now, to arouse the most joyous emotions of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God. All men are invited to join the ranks of the RESTORATION. You are invited to come and stand upon the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever, to accept the Word of God, all the Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God, as your religious authority and the basis of everlasting life. You are invited to become a Crusader for New Testament Christianity. You are requested to do this without regard to your own personal sacrifice or the willingness or unwillingness of friends and associates.

Here is the non-demoninational way. Here is the way wherein children of God may walk as Christians and Christians only, unbranded by human labels, unfettered by human creeds, unregimented by religious prelates, unspoiled by the world's vain deceit. Here is a citadel of impregnable strength. The RESTORATION is a message for every man. It is a message for all who hear this sermon. It is a message for you. You are invited to take up the cross and follow Christ through time to eternity. In Jesus' Name, AMEN.

QUESTION FOR OCTOBER 7, 1956

"IS THE BIBLE STATEMENT 'BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIVERS' SPEAKING OF MARRIAGE?"

This Scripture is found in the Sixth Chapter of Second Corinthians, and it establishes a principle which is not limited to marriage, but it applies to any unequal relationship between a Christian and a non-Christian. It forbids a Christian to tie himself to a marriage partner, a business partner or any other kind of partner who is an unbeliever; for, as the Lord asks, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14).

QUESTION FOR OCTOBER 14, 1956

"WHAT IS YOUR RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE?"

Our sole authoritative guide in spiritual affairs is the New Testament. We rely on no other book, discipline or manual than the will of Christ. We may read the writings of men with pleasure and profit, but we read the Word of God for Divine Guidance. It tells us how to become Christians, and how to live and die as Christians. In the New Testament, the Lord directs us to speak as the Oracles of God, and to refrain from adding anything to His word or removing anything therefrom. (1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 22:18, 19.) These Scriptures teach that the will of Christ alone is authoritative, and that it is complete in every way.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

September 30, 1956

Receipts	\$22,825.85
Expenditures	24,622.89
Expenditures Exceed Receipts.....	1,797.04

This abbreviated financial statement is being made in order to have the report printed without delay. Any information other than these figures will be given gladly on request and up-to-date statements will be printed at regular intervals.

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